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### Ewart Geoffrey Walsh

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# Obituaries

## Ewart Geoffrey Walsh

An expert on the physiology of the human nervous system

Geoffrey Walsh undertook ingenious physiological measurements on human subjects to study the sensory nervous system or understand motor control problems in children with cerebral palsy and adults with multiple sclerosis. Often he used apparatus that he designed and constructed himself.

After clinical appointments Dr Walsh obtained his MRCP in 1950 and was appointed lecturer in physiology at Edinburgh University, where he remained for the rest of his career, subsequently becoming senior lecturer and reader. He was an internationally acclaimed expert on the physiology of the human nervous system, lecturing at universities worldwide, and he published more than 150 scientific papers on human neurophysiology, biomechanics, and clinical physiology. His first book, *Physiology of the Nervous System*, was a classic.

A major innovation was his measurement of muscle tone by the assessment of resonating frequency and his demonstration



that muscles behaved thixotropically, sometimes like a solid and sometimes, when shaken or stirred, like a liquid—a bit like tomato ketchup. This was a unique system, which remains the only objective measurement of muscle tone. His book *Muscles*,

*Masses and Motion: The Physiology of Normality, Hypotonicity, Spasticity and Rigidity* was published in 1992. This represented a compendium of current knowledge about posture control in normal people, including medical students and Buddhist monks, and in those with special skills such as sportsmen and musicians, and in children with cerebral palsy. He was latterly involved in bio-mechanical research investigating “shaken baby syndrome.”

Geoffrey lived for neurophysiology experiments and Edinburgh medical students and staff remember being recruited as volunteers for yet another study on complex finger movements or tests of vestibular function.

He leaves three daughters and their families. [R A MINNS, M LAKIE]

*Ewart Geoffrey Walsh, former reader in physiology Edinburgh University (b Cheltenham 1922; q Oxford 1947; MD (Harvard), FRCP, FRCP Ed, FRS Ed, d 26 March 2003.*

## Elizabeth Anne Alexander (née Gillberry)



*Family planning medical officer Coventry and Warwickshire, medical officer University of Warwick, and Benefits Agency medical examiner (b Liverpool 1927; q Liverpool University 1955), died from a series of small strokes on 4 May 2003*

After house jobs, she moved to a Bristol pathology rotation and then, following marriage, to London, where she combined a

research post at the Institute of Dermatology with evening surgeries in general practice. In 1963 she moved to Coventry, where family planning clinics (then for married women only) allowed the possibility of some sessional work. She worked with others to found the Coventry Brook Clinic. In 1970 the University of Warwick, alarmed by its high student pregnancy rate, invited her to start family planning sessions. She leaves a husband, David, and a son. [TIM ALEXANDER, DAVID ALEXANDER]

## Baij Nath Bhandari

*Former physician New Delhi (b 1906; q Durham 1930; MD, MRCP, DTM), d 21 May 2003.*

Major general Baij Nath Bhandari had an illustrious career with the Indian Army Medical Corps, from which he retired as a deputy director of medical services. He was one time principal of Maulana Azad Medical College and medical director of Irwin Hospital, New Delhi. In the second part of his life he dedicated himself to the poorest of the poor in the bastis (slums) of New

Delhi, providing free primary health care services. He became closely involved with the Arpana charity, which works to empower poor people in the villages of India. His translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* from Hindi into English is a reflection of his good understanding of Hindi and Sanskrit and was well received. He leaves a wife, Kamla, and two daughters. [RAGHU GAIND]

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